THE

WORLD.

NUMBER XLIV.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *November* the 1ſt, 1753.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

A JUSTLY admired poet of our own times, ſpeaking in reference to his art, tells us, that

True wit is nature to advantage dreſs'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er ſo well expreſs'd.

THE ſame, it is preſumed, may be ſaid of almoſt every kind of writing. Europe is at preſent ſo much enlightened, that it is hardly poſſible to ſtrike out a ſingle notion abſolutely new, or which has never been touched upon by ſomebody before us. Religion, philoſophy, and morality in particular, have been ſo thoroughly canvaſed, that ſuch as would treat upon thoſe ſubjects

ſubjects now, have ſcarce any thing left them, but to ſet ſome beaten thought in a different light, and like a ſkillful cook, endeavour to render the fare of yeſterday pallatable again to-day, by a various dreſſing. If it can be got down and digeſted, there are always hopes of its conveying ſome nouriſhment; and whether it be taken for turtle, or veniſon; pheaſant, or moor-game; beef, or mutton; is not a farthing's matter, ſo it be reliſhed by the gueſts. Whether I am poſſeſſed of any part of this ſkill, muſt be left to the deciſion of each perſon's taſte. All I dare engage for is, that no unwholſome ingredient ſhall enter into my compoſition; and if on the one hand, it ſhould be inſipid, on the other, it ſhall be as harmleſs as a bit of dry bread.

But to my ſubject. The compariſon of man's life to a journey, and the concluſions uſually drawn from thence, are not the leſs true, for being trite and common. When we reflect, that to be exceſſively anxious for the wealth, honours, and pleaſures of this tranſitory world, is juſt as ridiculous as it would be to torment ourſelves becauſe our accommodations at an inn (which we are to quit the next morning) are not ſufficiently ſumptuous, the aptneſs of the alluſion ſtares us in the face: the aſſent is extorted whilſt the mind dwells upon it; and people of every perſuaſion, however they may diſagree in other propoſitions, concur in this, as in a ſelf-evident axiom.

Yet herein do we reſemble the caſe of him, who is ſaid in Scripture, *to behold his figure in a glaſs, but ſtrait forgetteth what manner of man he was*; and, as if a fatality hung over us, our memories are ſtill found worſt, in the matter that concerns us moſt; namely, in the acquiſition of tranquility, that *ſummum bonum* on this ſide the grave. A heathen could tell us, that this ineſtimable

mable treaſure lies at our feet; but that we giddily ſtumble over it, in the purſuit of bubbles. On theſe we beſtow all our ſtrenuous exertions; the other has only our indolent wiſhes.

BUT if we are candidates in earneſt for this TEMPORAL felicity, and which at the ſame time leads by the ſmoothеſt road to the CÆLESTIAL, the firſt ſtep ſhould be to diſcover what that is, which oppoſes and excludes it: and as it is utterly impoſſible that two contraries ſhould peaceably inhabit the ſame breaſt, let us reſolve to drive out the agreſſor.

THAT perturbations of every kind are capital enemies to TRANQUILITY, ſpeaks itſelf: but it may require ſome ſcrutiny to diſcern that the common parent from whence moſt of theſe proceed is PRIDE. I ſay, *moſt* of theſe; for if want, pain, fear, and intemperance be excepted, it is preſumed that few obſtacles to ſerenity can be imagined, which are not fairly deducible from this ſingle vice.

THE inimitable Mr. Addiſon, in one of his Spectators, mentions guilt and atheiſm, as the only warrantable precluders of CHEARFULNESS: nor is it here intended to contravert his ſuperior judgment; this being merely an eſſay to prove that PRIDE is the great ſource from whence almoſt every other ſpecies of guilt flows. And as for atheiſm, it may I think without much torturing the argument, be placed to the ſame account.

BUT let us firſt try the truth of this propoſition, upon actual, or practical vices, as diſtinguiſhed from ſpeculative errors; and thence diſcover to what degree they may be ſaid to *hold of this lady paramount*; conſequently how far we are indebted to her for the miſeries which fill the world with complaints.

SICKNESS, pain, fear, want, and intemperance, have already been excepted, as productive of diſorders in the

ſoul

ſoul, which derive not immediately from this origin: at leaſt, it can hardly with propriety be ſaid, that a perſon is proud of a diſeaſe, of cowardice, or of indigence; though it has been obſerved, that ſome have had the prepoſterous folly to glory in being lewd, a drunkard, or a glutton.

WHETHER human nature be capable of bearing up with chearfulneſs and indolence againſt theſe evils, (from what cauſe ſoever ariſing) is a queſtion foreign to the preſent buſineſs, which is to excite every thinking perſon ſtrictly to examine the catalogue of vices, one by one; and then to aſk his own heart what reſemblance they bear to the prolific parent here aſſigned them: and it is preſumed, that nothing more is neceſſary than the holding up the progeny to view, in order to aſcertain their deſcent.

IT may be gathered from the moſt authentic teſtimony, that her firſt born was AMBITION; brought to light in the days of your nameſake Adam, and ever ſince, whether clad in a red coat, and armed with a cymitar and firebrand, or in the more gentle habit of a ſtateſman, courtier, beau, lawyer, divine, &c. ſtill confeſſes the kindred in every feature, and action. It is not very material in what order the ſubſequent iſſue were produced. But, that envy, hatred, malice, tyranny, anger, implacability, revenge, cruelty, impatience, obſtinacy, violence, treachery, ingratitude, ſelf-love, avarice, profuſion; together with the ſmaller ſhoots, detraction, impertinence, loquacity, petulance, affectation, &c. do all derive from this MATER FAMILIÆ, will, I perſuade myſelf, moſt evidently appear to a curious obſerver.

To enumerate the infinite diſorders and calamities that diſperſe themſelves from this root, intrude into every place, and are inceſſant plagues to individuals, as well as to ſociety, were an endleſs taſk. Who ſhall tell the

ſecret

ſecret pangs of the heart in which ſhe is planted? But her baleful influence is diſcernable, wherever *two or three are gathered together*. Even at the altar, and whilſt the tongue, in compliance with the ritual, is uttering the moſt humiliating epithets, you ſhall perceive her inconſiſtently tricked out, and by a thouſand fantaſtic airs, attracting the worſhip of the aſſiſtants, from the DEITY, to herſelf.

TRACE her from the court, into the city; and there, from the general trader, to the retailer, mechanic, and pedlar: thence into the country, from the ſquire, to the farmer, and day-labourer: deſcend as low as to the ſcavenger, chimney-ſweeper and nightman; ſtill, through all their dirt and filth, you may occaſionally diſcern her.

NOR is her PARENTAL dominion confined to the climates or nations called civilized. Travel to the poles, or into the burning zone; among the Bramins, Banians, and Facquars; among the Iroquois, Canibals, and Hottentots; even there ſhall you meet with the operations of this PRIMUM MOBILE. What but the arrogance of ſuperior merit, inſtigates the firſt of theſe to aſſume a right of domineering over the conſciences of their fellows, and damning the ſouls of thoſe who differ from them? And for the Hottentots, who that reads the accounts of the inſolence with which they torment, before they eat their enemies, can doubt whether they are actuated by hunger, or haughtineſs? In a word, from the feuds that lay waſte whole kingdoms, down to the ſickly ſpleen which devours the ſlighted coquet, or the fine lady ſuperceded in her place, we need look no farther for the author of the griefs which poiſon our peace.

IN relation to matters purely ſpeculative, none who are ever ſo little converſant in them, can be at a loſs for numerous inſtances of the havock made with learning, truth, and religion, by the dogmatical impoſition of hypotheſis

and